

February 16, 2017 (*Change 1 supersedes previous memorandum.)

Memorandum for Visitor Impact Task Force [Regular Meeting - February 14, 2017, Item 7: Deadline Extension, Project Consideration]

Subject: Detrick-Hamilton House and Appendix Proposed Book Project Funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT), Tax Code, Ch. 351

1. **Gratitude:** Special thanks to Assistant City Manager Dr. Mark Washington and Fellow Ginger Yachinich for being so receptive and responsive to my Detrick-Hamilton House (African-American Visitors Center) book/cultural literacy idea, noted before Austin City Council last Thursday (February 9, 2017), and for inviting me to make a brief presentation before the Visitor Impact Task Force.

2. **Significance:** Detrick-Hamilton House, schools, and transit issues reflect East Austin gentrification and virtual erasure of history.

a. Genesis: Curiosity about the Detrick-Hamilton name created the book idea. "The reason the house is historic is because my great-grandfather was among the first to settle in East Austin after Emancipation and built that house," noted Darwin Hamilton (former owner/heir of the Detrick-Hamilton House/African-American Visitors Center). "[F]or it to remain in one family for five generations, that's the significance of it because as African-Americans we can't point to a place and say, 'Hey, this is the house that my family built after slavery.' So that's what makes the house historic" (Z. C. Joseph, personal conversation, September 18, 2016 [Austin Museum Day]).

b. State Law: The book project promotes cultural heritage and tourism; provides a resource for P-20 educators; and aligns with the Visitor Impact Task Force charge, "Review of Texas Tax Code Chapter 351 and allowable uses of Hotel Occupancy Taxes under the Tax Code including parks, **historic preservation, cultural heritage**, music, arts, special events, fee waivers, convention, visitors bureau, **transportation, downtown districts**, venues and other facilities and debt defeasance for city-owned hotels and convention facilities[.]"

3. **Research Timeline:** African-American Cultural Heritage District.

On or about 2013: I went to Austin History Center to research Detrick-Hamilton House. Why this name and house? Only one Xeroxed page appeared in a manila folder. "Freed slave Thomas Detrick and his son, William, constructed the Detrick-Hamilton House around 1892" (VOH Architecture, 2015). . . . and family member James Hamilton was the last to reside there" (GABC, 2013).

September 18, 2016 (Austin Museum Day): **Darwin Hamilton**, Detrick-Hamilton descendant, introduced himself to me after we viewed mini-documentaries produced by Six Square titled District Docs.¹ "I used to own the African-American Visitors Center, the Detrick-Hamilton House," he said. "Oh, I've been there," I replied, "the little yellow house." "I'm the former owner/heir of that property. I grew up there. So I can contribute a lot to the history of East 11th Street, of **East Austin**, [and] Six Square basically." In conversing with Darwin, I learned that the City of Austin acquired the property through eminent domain in 2003 but, he added, "I fought them for two years. They never had a site plan." He shared, too, that Mayor Steve Adler (Eminent Domain lawyer) helped file his appeal. I then shared my desire to write a book on the Detrick-Hamilton House history, considering only sparse footage exists. Darwin agreed, "I say the same thing."

September 22, 2016 (Council Proponent): **Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo** emphasized the need for the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau to **focus on "heritage tourism"** during Item 6 lengthy discourse (1:08:30), in part: "Approve a resolution adopting the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau 2016-2017 marketing plan and proposed budget of \$19,282,933[.]"²

2016: Testified before Council on HOT and Spirit of East Austin, noting my *Harvard Journal of African-American Public Policy* research.

February 9, 2017: Austin City Council Regular Meeting, Consent Item 33. Resolution 20151112-033: Directs staff to explore HOT uses. Testified before Council on Detrick-Hamilton House book idea & HOT funds (Clip 18:31: <http://austintx.swagit.com/play/02092017-636>)

4. **Six Square Mini-Doc Critique:** Too contemporary. Rap music and spoken word contextualized each era of Austin's history with an attempt to elevate contributions of Black Austinites and historic landmarks (e.g., Rosewood Projects). It would have been more accurate to include music from each era and artwork or primary sources aimed at preserving East Austin's historic six square miles. In part, the mural on 11th/Waller portrays Cab Calloway and renowned jazz musicians. Music from these musicians could have provided a poignant backdrop in telling East Austin's Black cultural significance. Darwin Hamilton noted that Six Square's Past-Executive Director "Lisa Byrd wasn't from Austin" and the new director isn't either. In the audience during the mini-doc screening was Mrs. Street whose husband is named for Street-Jones Building (11th St.). "Everybody's not dead," he said. Including Street's oral history in the project would be ideal.

5. **Research:** Joseph, Z. C. (2009, Summer). "I-35 Divide" Conundrum: Can a True Community-University Partnership Grant Austin's Gifted/Talented K-12 African-American Males Access to College? *Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy*, XV, 9-35.

- Retrieved from <http://hjaap.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/HJAAP-2009.pdf>

Very respectfully,



Zenobia C. Joseph

Educational Consultant/Policy Analyst e: apluswriters@gmail.com [w: apluswriters.wix.com/zcjsph]

¹ *The Austin Chronicle* (2016, September 18). Austin Museum Day (p. 2). Retrieved from <http://www.austinchronicle.com/download/2016-09-16/museum.pdf>

² Austin City Council Regular Meeting (2016, September 22). Item 6: ACVB Budget resolution. Retrieved from <http://austintx.swagit.com/play/09222016-643/>

Subject: Proposed Dedrick-Hamilton House Book Project Funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT), Tax Code, Ch. 351, Public Comment

Appendix: Two Other Historic Book Ideas Undergirded by Gentrification Presented to Visitor Impact Task Force February 14, 2017

State Law: Govt. Code, §§ 2254.026, [Cultural] Contract; 2254.027, Consultant Selection. **Sole Source:** No-bid professional service.

HOT: The Austin Past and Present Project that I worked on covers 1920-2006. HOT funds may extend this work. The Austin Past and Present DVD primary sources include East Austin Blacks and Hispanics protesting during Civil Rights struggles in the context of Austin's overall history with K-12 lessons. This book proposal aims to serve tourists and community (P-20 educators). Once published, ideally annually, each book will be placed in Austin Public Library and sold at Dedrick-Hamilton House (Book 1). Two other books follow.

Theme: Gentrification, discrimination, and unintended consequences of displacing residents to increase tourism in the central core.

- Genre: Historical Non-Fiction. Technology: I envision the project will include oral history videos in Dedrick-Hamilton House.

What's positive? Funding this proposal supports Gov. Greg Abbott's State of the State veteran entrepreneurship focus (SB 1476) and Mayor Steve Adler's "Spirit of East Austin" commitment while preserving history and generating a return on investment (book sales).

Problem: Austin Public Library (APL) has few resources on East Austin contributions by African-Americans and Hispanics. More broadly, APL's Black History resources remain sparse. Years ago, for example, I found a Stanford video by professor Clay Carson titled, "Lecture 7 | African-American Freedom Struggle (Stanford)" (uploaded June 6, 2008). "This class session is a guest lecture by Awele Makeba on 'The Women Who Made the Montgomery Movement'. Recorded October 16, 2007." I, subsequently, checked out the only copy of this Montgomery Movement book. In 2017, APL still only has one copy of this rare story noting Claudette Colvin's Montgomery Bus Boycott contributions nine months before Rosa Parks. Teachers, thus, cannot teach students what they do not know!

Solution 1: Education Book: Tuesday (February 14, 2017), KUT (90.5 FM) aired a story about Austin Independent School District's (AISD) consideration of moving the Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA) to the Alternative Learning Center (Old Anderson High School)—property located in the heart of East Austin across from Austin Community College-Eastview Campus. One interviewee said moving LASA would be the "ultimate step in gentrification." When I briefed the Visitor Impact Task Force on February 14, 2017, I had no knowledge the speaker was Dr. Ted Gordon (AISD District 1 Trustee/UT Professor). I later listened to the online clip and realized KUT also discussed the potential closure of eight (8) AISD schools as noted in *Austin American-Statesman* on Sunday (February 12, 2017).

- Gentrification Significance: To move LASA to a "more centralized place," knowing that Blacks and Hispanics are unable to afford to live downtown in the "central core" means AISD will endorse Austin's trend of catering to the minority population in a majority-minority state. The converse to that argument, however, is the realization that LASA exists in a two-tiered system. LASA ranks #1 upstairs while LBJ fails downstairs. LASA is predominantly white while LBJ is predominantly Black and Brown. Though located in the building with LBJ High School, LASA still serves to curtail white flight (Cuban, 2008; Joseph, 2009).
- Related Story: February 15, 2017 **Council Member Ora Houston** gave a Black History Month talk on community policing at Windsor Library. In answering a question about racialized policing history where Black cops couldn't arrest a white person in East Austin during segregation, Houston gave an overview of Austin's history related to 11th Street clubs (famous musicians) and her **segregated education** where Black teachers with a Master's degree were moved to west Austin as east Austin schools were "back-filled with UT students." Her story reflects a **void in Austin's history**. An Anglo constituent encouraged folk to watch PBS' Austin Revealed—oral history project showcasing Black Austinites. AISD's magnet schools (e.g., Kealing, LASA), thus, equate to institutional racism. Hence there remains a need to write East Austin's two-tiered education story.
- Research: I found one book on Austin teachers' desegregation experience following closure of the Old Anderson High School in Austin Public Library (APL) titled, "Oh, Do I Remember!" (Anna Victoria Wilson, William E. Segall, 2001). As best I recall, I requested APL order more copies after I shared the book title at an Austin History Center event. Today four APL copies exist.

Solution 2: Transportation Book: Tuesday (February 14, 2017) during the Visitor Impact Task Force Meeting, a member asked a panelist from Austin Police Department about tourists—bike lanes and safety to/from the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

- Problem: Resolution 20151112-033 #10 notes "planned transit improvements." Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) is reviewing **Connections 2025. The 10-year plan** is reviewed every five years to improve the system. An unintended consequence, however, of increasing central core frequency is the removal of coverage (lifeline access). Dismantling North Lamar Transit Center (off Hwy 183), which serves predominantly minority and low-income riders, removes 9 buses and #300 (highest ridership) will relocate to Westgate. As UT gets new buses, North Austin buses break down. The plan reduces 15 North buses to 4 (#1, 383, 801 & 803 Rapid) to serve Central and South/west Austin absent public discourse.
- Gentrification Significance: Austin's 1928 City Plan relegated Blacks to East Austin. I-35 Divide still segregates the City. Removing buses from Northeast Austin to serve white tourists and wealthy residents places a burden on transit-dependent **people of color and low-income taxpayers**. On July 28, 2014, CapMetro discussed North Lamar Transit Center Redevelopment "prime property" and \$2.1M line item appears in the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization 2040 Plan (p. 188). However, CapMetro never discussed removal of all buses in 2016-2017. On January 23, 2017, Chief Counsel Kerri Butcher told me on the record that Service Equity Analyses "would be ineffective now." Yet November 7, 2016 CapMetro restored service to UT-Austin, Mueller, and 333 (William Cannon) two days after discord by 50 people meeting in Southwest Austin with Board/Council Member Ann Kitchen. When over 574 riders opposed North Austin changes, CapMetro made no changes. The price marginalized riders pay to make Austin appealing to tourists is a story that needs to be told.
- Research: *Just Transportation: Dismantling Race & Class Barriers to Mobility* (1997) includes foreword by Congressman John Lewis and a chapter by local activist **Susana Alamanza** with Raul Alvarez. HOT funds may update and extend this text.